



Human Rights Committee

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Banning Gay and Trans Conversion Therapy

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Position Statement:

The State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council supports the banning of gay and transgender conversion therapy.

Position

It should be the position of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, the voice of the Iowa's youth, to create legislation that eliminates the use of gay and transgender conversion therapy.

Rationale

Conversion therapy is practice of attempting to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity through psychological torture, including shaming, hypnosis, electric shocking, and induced vomiting. These techniques have not only proven to be ineffective but also dangerous. Also, they have been proven to lead to higher rates of substance abuse, depression, and suicide [3]. Youth exposed to conversion therapy are 8 times more likely to commit suicide and 6 times more likely to report clinical levels of depression [6].

16 states have already implemented legislation similar to this, and Colorado is working to pass a bill in the near future [2]. Another Midwest state, Illinois, banned conversion therapy via the Youth Mental Health Protection Act, enacted in May of 2015, which bans health providers and counselors from referring patients to conversion therapy or administering it themselves [7]. Furthermore, Iowa Safe Schools is leading an effort to ban this practice, which is prehistoric and misaligned with modern society [1]. The fact that this practice is still allowed shows that there is a negative stigma towards the LGBTQ+ community; a practice like this shouldn't be legally allowed on any group of people [2]. Conversion therapy is state sponsored discrimination and allows the government to sanction an inherent human rights violation against the LGBTQ+ community. We uphold the tenets of our state and further LGBTQ+ rights by abolishing this archaic and destructive institution [5].

Recommended Action

The following steps should be taken to address this issue:

1. Declare conversion therapy as illegal in the state of Iowa.
2. Declare that conversion therapy administered to minors is considered child abuse, and thus punishable in the same ways.
 - a. The State of Iowa Public Health Department has power to discipline health professionals who recommend or administer conversion therapy.
3. Mandatory reporting of conversion therapy cases.
4. Licensed mental health professional cannot recommend or conduct conversion therapy in any case whatsoever.

Regards,

Human Rights Committee
State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council